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Monday, 27 January 2003, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. De La Sablière	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

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03-22461 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Blix to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. ElBaradei to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, at this meeting.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

Mr. Blix: Resolution 1441 (2002), adopted by the Security Council on Iraq in November last year, asks the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to "update" the Council 60 days after the resumption of inspections. This is today. The updating, it seems, forms part of an assessment by the Council and its members of the results, so far, of the inspections and of their role as a means to achieve verifiable disarmament in Iraq.

As this is an open meeting of the Council, it may be appropriate briefly to provide some background for a better understanding of where we stand today. With the Council's permission, I shall do so.

I begin by recalling that inspections as a part of a disarmament process in Iraq started in 1991, immediately after the Gulf War. They went on for eight years, until 1998, when inspectors were withdrawn. Thereafter, for nearly four years there were no inspections. They were resumed only at the end of November last year.

While the fundamental aim of inspections in Iraq has always been to verify disarmament, the successive resolutions adopted by the Council over the years have varied somewhat in emphasis and approach. In 1991, resolution 687 (1991), adopted unanimously as a part of the ceasefire after the Gulf war, had five major elements. The first three related to disarmament. They called for declarations by Iraq of its programmes of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles, verification of the declarations through the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the IAEA, and supervision by these organizations of the destruction or the elimination of proscribed items and programmes. After the completion of the disarmament, the Council would have the authority to proceed to a lifting of the sanctions and the inspecting organizations would move to long-term ongoing monitoring and verification.

Resolution 687 (1991), like the subsequent resolutions to which I shall refer, required cooperation by Iraq, but this was often withheld or given grudgingly. Unlike South Africa, which decided on its own to eliminate its nuclear weapons and welcomed

inspection as a means of creating confidence in its disarmament, Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance — not even today — of the disarmament that was demanded of it and that it needs to carry out to win the confidence of the world and to live in peace.

As we know, the twin operation "declare and verify", which was prescribed in resolution 687 (1991), too often turned into a game of hide-and-seek. Rather than just verifying declarations and supporting evidence, the two inspecting organizations found themselves engaged in efforts to map the weapons programmes and to search for evidence through inspections, interviews, seminars, inquiries with suppliers and intelligence organizations. As a result, the disarmament phase was not completed in the short time expected. Sanctions remained and took a severe toll until Iraq accepted the oil for food programme and the gradual development of that programme mitigated the effects of the sanctions.

The implementation of resolution 687 (1991) nevertheless brought about considerable disarmament results. It has been recognized that more weapons of mass destruction were destroyed under this resolution than were destroyed during the Gulf War: large quantities of chemical weapons were destroyed under UNSCOM supervision before 1994. While Iraq claims — with little evidence — that it destroyed all biological weapons unilaterally in 1991, it is certain that UNSCOM destroyed large biological weapons production facilities in 1996. The large nuclear infrastructure was destroyed and the fissionable material was removed from Iraq by the IAEA.

One of three important questions before us today is how much might remain undeclared and intact from before 1991 and, possibly, thereafter; the second question is what, if anything, was illegally produced or procured after 1998, when the inspectors left; and the third question is how we can prevent any weapons of mass destruction from being produced or procured in the future.

In December 1999 — after one year without inspections in Iraq — resolution 1284 (1999) was adopted by the Council, with four abstentions. Supplementing the basic resolutions of 1991 and of the following years, it provided Iraq with a somewhat less ambitious approach: in return for "cooperation in all respects" for a specified period of time, including progress in the resolution of "key remaining disarmament tasks", it opened the possibility, not for the lifting, but for the suspension of sanctions.

For nearly three years, Iraq refused to accept any inspections by UNMOVIC. It was only after appeals by the Secretary-General and Arab States, and pressure by the United States and other Member States, that Iraq declared, on 16 September last year, that it would again accept inspections without conditions.

Resolution 1441 (2002) was adopted on 8 November last year and emphatically reaffirmed the demand on Iraq to cooperate. It required this cooperation to be immediate, unconditional and active. The resolution contained many provisions that we welcome as enhancing and strengthening the inspection regime. The unanimity by which it was adopted sent a powerful signal that the Council was of one mind in creating a last opportunity for peaceful disarmament in Iraq through inspection.

UNMOVIC shares the sense of urgency felt by the Council to use inspection as a path to attain, within a reasonable time, verifiable disarmament of Iraq. Under the resolutions I have cited, it would be followed by monitoring for such time as the Council feels would be required. The resolutions also point to a zone free of weapons of mass destruction as the ultimate goal.

As a subsidiary body of the Council, UNMOVIC is fully aware of and appreciates the close attention that the Council devotes to the inspections in Iraq. While today's "updating" is foreseen in resolution 1441 (2002), the Council can and does call for additional briefings whenever it wishes. One was held on 19 January, and a further such briefing is tentatively set for 14 February.

I turn now to the key requirement of cooperation and Iraq's response to it. Cooperation might be said to relate to both substance and process. It would appear from our experience so far that Iraq has decided in principle to provide cooperation on process, notably access. A similar decision is indispensable to provide cooperation on substance in order to bring the disarmament task to completion through the peaceful process of inspection and to set the monitoring task on a firm course. An initial minor step would be to adopt the long-overdue legislation required by the resolutions.

I shall deal first with cooperation on process. This relates to the procedures, mechanisms, infrastructure and practical arrangements to pursue inspections and seek verifiable disarmament. While inspection is not built on the premise of confidence but may lead to confidence if it is successful, there must nevertheless be a measure of mutual confidence from the very beginning in running the operation of inspection.

Iraq has, on the whole, cooperated rather well so far with UNMOVIC in this field. The most important point to make is that access has been provided to all sites we have wanted to inspect, and, with one exception, it has been prompt. We have further had great help in building up the infrastructure of our office in Baghdad and the field office in Mosul. Arrangements and services for our plane and our helicopters have been good. The environment has been workable. Our inspections have included universities, military bases, presidential sites and private residences. Inspections have also taken place on Fridays, the Muslim day of rest; on Christmas Day; and on New Year's Day. These inspections have been conducted in the same manner as all other inspections. We seek to be both effective and correct.

In this updating, I am bound, however, to register some problems, the first relating to two kinds of air operations. While we now have the technical capability to send a U-2 plane placed at our disposal for aerial imagery and for surveillance during inspections and have informed Iraq that we planned to do so, Iraq has refused to guarantee its safety unless a number of conditions are fulfilled. As these conditions went beyond what is stipulated in resolution 1441 (2002) and what was practiced by UNSCOM and Iraq in the past, we note that so far Iraq is not complying with our request. I hope this attitude will change.

Another air operation problem, which was solved during our recent talks in Baghdad, concerned the use of helicopters flying into the no-fly zones. Iraq had insisted on sending helicopters of its own to accompany ours. This would have raised a safety problem. The matter was solved by an offer on our part to take the accompanying Iraqi minders in our helicopters to the sites, an arrangement that had been practiced by UNSCOM in the past.

I am obliged to note some recent disturbing incidents and harassment. For instance, for some time, far-fetched allegations have been made publicly that questions posed by inspectors were of an intelligence character. While I might not defend every question that inspectors might have asked, Iraq knows that they do not serve intelligence purposes, and Iraq should not say so.

On a number of occasions, demonstrations have taken place in front of our offices and at inspection sites. The other day, a sightseeing excursion by five inspectors to a mosque was followed by an unwarranted public outburst. The inspectors went without United Nations insignia and were welcomed in the kind manner that is characteristic of the normal Iraqi attitude to foreigners. They took off their shoes and were taken around. They asked perfectly innocent questions and parted with the invitation to come again. Shortly thereafter, we received protests from the Iraqi authorities about an unannounced inspection and about questions not relevant to weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, they were not.

Demonstrations and outbursts of this kind are unlikely to occur in Iraq without initiative or encouragement from the authorities. We must ask ourselves what the motives may be for these events. They do not facilitate an already difficult job, in which we try to be effective, professional and, at the same time, correct. When our Iraqi counterparts have some complaint, they can take it up in a calmer and less unpleasant manner.

The substantive cooperation required relates above all to the obligation of Iraq to declare all programmes of weapons of mass destruction and either to present items and activities for elimination or else to provide evidence supporting the conclusion that nothing proscribed remains.

Paragraph 9 of resolution 1441 (2002) states that this cooperation shall be "active". It is not enough to open doors. Inspection is not a game of catch as catch can. Rather, as I noted, it is a process of verification for the purpose of creating confidence. It is not built upon the premise of trust. Rather, it is designed to lead to trust, if there is both openness to the inspectors and action to present them with items to destroy, or credible evidence about the absence of any such items.

On 7 December 2002, Iraq submitted a declaration of some 12,000 pages in response to paragraph 3 of resolution 1441 (2002), and within the time stipulated by the Security Council. In the fields of missiles and biotechnology, the declaration contains a

good deal of new material and information covering the period from 1998 and onward. This is welcome.

One might have expected that in preparing the declaration, Iraq would have tried to respond to, clarify and submit supporting evidence regarding the many open disarmament issues, with which the Iraqi side should be familiar from the UNSCOM document S/1999/94 and the so-called Amorim report of March 1999 (S/1999/356). These are questions that UNMOVIC, Governments and independent commentators have often cited.

While UNMOVIC has been preparing its own list of current unresolved disarmament issues and key remaining disarmament tasks in response to requirements in resolution 1284 (1999), we find the issues listed as unresolved in the two reports that I mentioned professionally justified. These reports do not contend that weapons of mass destruction remain in Iraq, nor do they exclude that possibility. They point to a lack of evidence and to inconsistencies, which raise question marks and which must be straightened out if weapons dossiers are to be closed and confidence is to arise.

Those issues deserve to be taken seriously by Iraq, rather than being brushed aside as evil machinations of UNSCOM. Regrettably, the 12,000 page declaration, most of which is a reprint of earlier documents, does not seem to contain any new evidence that would eliminate the questions or reduce their number. Even Iraq's letter sent, in response to our recent discussions in Baghdad, to the President of the Security Council on 24 January does not lead us to the resolution of those issues.

I shall only give some examples of issues and questions that need to be answered, and I turn first to the sector of chemical weapons.

The nerve agent VX is one of the most toxic ever developed. Iraq has declared that it only produced VX on a pilot scale, just a few tonnes, and that the quality was poor and the product unstable. Consequently, it was said that the agent was never weaponized. Iraq said that the small quantity of agent remaining after the Gulf War was unilaterally destroyed in the summer of 1991.

UNMOVIC, however, has information that conflicts with this account. There are indications that Iraq had worked on the problem of purity and stabilization and that more had been achieved than has been declared. Indeed, one of the documents provided by Iraq even indicates that the purity of the agent, at least in laboratory production, was higher than declared. There are also indications that the agent was weaponized.

In addition, there are questions to be answered concerning the fate of the VX precursor chemicals, which Iraq states were lost during bombing in the Gulf War or were unilaterally destroyed by Iraq.

I would now like to turn to the so-called Air Force document that I have discussed with the Council before. This document was originally found by an UNSCOM inspector in a safe in Iraqi Air Force headquarters in 1998 and taken from her by Iraqi minders. It gives an account of the expenditure of bombs, including chemical bombs, by Iraq in the Iraq-Iran war. I am encouraged by the fact that Iraq has now provided this document to UNMOVIC.

The document indicates that 13,000 chemical bombs were dropped by the Iraqi Air Force between 1983 and 1988, while Iraq has declared that 19,500 bombs were consumed during this period. Thus, there is a discrepancy of 6,500 bombs. The amount of chemical agent in these bombs would be in the order of about 1,000 tonnes. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we must assume that these quantities are now unaccounted for.

The discovery of a number of 122 millimetre chemical rocket warheads in a bunker at a storage depot 170 kilometre southwest of Baghdad was much publicized. This was a relatively new bunker, and therefore the rockets must have been moved there in the past few years, at a time when Iraq should not have had such munitions.

The investigation of these rockets is still proceeding. Iraq states that they were overlooked from 1991 from a batch of some 2,000 that were stored there during the Gulf War. That could be the case. They could also be the tip of a submerged iceberg. The discovery of a few rockets does not resolve, but rather points to, the issue of several thousands of chemical rockets that are unaccounted for.

The finding of the rockets shows that Iraq needs to make more effort to ensure that its declaration is currently accurate. During my recent discussions in Baghdad, Iraq declared that it would make new efforts

in this regard and had set up a committee of investigation. Since then it has reported that it has found four more chemical rockets at a storage depot in Al-Taji.

I might further mention that inspectors have found at another site a laboratory quantity of thiodiglycol, a mustard gas precursor.

While I am addressing chemical issues, I should mention a matter, which I reported on 19 December 2002, concerning equipment at a civilian chemical plant at Al Fallujah. Iraq has declared that it had repaired chemical processing equipment previously destroyed under UNSCOM supervision and had installed it at Fallujah for the production of chlorine and phenols. We have inspected this equipment and are conducting a detailed technical evaluation of it. On completion, we will decide whether this and other equipment that has been recovered by Iraq should be destroyed.

I turn to biological weapons. I mentioned the issue of anthrax to the Council on previous occasions and I come back to it, as it is an important one. Iraq has declared that it produced about 8,500 litres of this biological warfare agent, which it states it unilaterally destroyed in the summer of 1991. Iraq has provided little evidence of that production and no convincing evidence of its destruction.

There are strong indications that Iraq produced more anthrax than it declared and that at least some of this was retained after the declared destruction date. It might still exist. Either it should be found and be destroyed under UNMOVIC's supervision, or convincing evidence should be produced to show that it was indeed destroyed in 1991.

As I reported to the Council on 19 December last year, Iraq did not declare a significant quantity, some 650 kilograms, of bacterial growth media, which was acknowledged, as reported in Iraq's submission to the Amorim panel in February 1999. As part of its 7 December 2002 declaration, Iraq resubmitted the Amorim panel document, but the table showing this particular import of media was not included. The absence of this table would appear to be deliberate, as the pages of the resubmitted document were renumbered.

In the letter of 24 January of this year to the President of the Security Council, Iraq's Foreign Minister stated that "all imported quantities of growth media were declared". This is not evidence. I note that the quantity of media involved would suffice to produce, for example, about 5,000 litres of concentrated anthrax.

I turn now to the missile sector. There remain significant questions as to whether Iraq retained SCUD-type missiles after the Gulf War. Iraq declared the consumption of a number of SCUD missiles as targets in the development of an anti-ballistic missile defence system during the 1980s. Yet no technical information has been produced about that programme or data on the consumption of the missiles.

There has been a range of developments in the missile field during the past four years, presented by Iraq in the declaration, as non-proscribed activities. We are trying to gather a clear understanding of them through inspections and on-site discussions.

Two projects in particular stand out. They are the development of a liquid-fuelled missile, named Al Samoud 2, and a solid propellant missile, called Al Fatah. Both missiles have been tested to a range in excess of the permitted range of 150 kilometres, with the Al Samoud 2 being tested to a maximum of 183 kilometres and the Al Fatah to 161 kilometres. Some of both types of missiles have already been provided to the Iraqi Armed Forces, even though it is stated that they are still undergoing development.

The Al Samoud's diameter was increased from an earlier version to the present 760 millimetres. This modification was made despite a 1994 letter from the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM directing Iraq to limit its missile diameters to less than 600 millimetres. Furthermore, a November 1997 letter from the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM to Iraq prohibited the use of engines from certain surface-to-air missiles for use in ballistic missiles.

During my recent meeting in Baghdad, we were briefed on these two programmes. We were told that the final range for both systems would be less than the permitted maximum of 150 kilometres.

These missiles might very well represent prima facie cases of proscribed systems. The test ranges in excess of 150 kilometres are significant, but some further technical considerations need to be made before we reach a conclusion on this issue. In the meantime,

we have asked Iraq to cease flight tests of both missiles.

In addition, Iraq has refurbished its missile production infrastructure. In particular, Iraq reconstituted a number of casting chambers, which had previously been destroyed under UNSCOM supervision. They had been used in the production of solid-fuel missiles. Whatever missile system these chambers are intended for, they could produce motors for missiles capable of ranges significantly greater than 150 kilometres.

Also associated with these missiles and related developments is the import, which has been taking place during the last few years, of a number of items, despite the sanctions, including as late as December 2002. Foremost among these is the import of 300 rocket engines that may be used for the Al Samoud 2.

Iraq has also declared the recent import of chemicals used in propellants, test instrumentation and guidance and control systems. These items may well be for proscribed purposes; that is yet to be determined. What is clear is that they were illegally brought into Iraq; that is, Iraq or some company in Iraq circumvented the restrictions imposed by various resolutions.

I have touched upon some of the disarmament issues that remain open and that need to be answered if dossiers are to be closed and confidence is to arise. Which are the means at the disposal of Iraq to answer these questions? I have pointed to some during my presentation of the issues. Let me be a little more systematic. Our Iraqi counterparts are fond of saying that there are no proscribed items, and if no evidence is presented to the contrary, they should have the benefit of the doubt, be presumed innocent. UNMOVIC, for its part, is not presuming that there are proscribed items and activities in Iraq, but nor does it or anyone else, after the inspections between 1991 and 1998, presume the opposite — that no such items and activities exist in Iraq. Presumptions do not solve the problem. Evidence and full transparency may help. Let me be specific.

Information provided by Member States tells us about the movement and concealment of missiles and chemical weapons and mobile units for biological weapons production. We shall certainly follow up any credible leads given to us and report what we might find, as well as any denial of access.

So far, we have reported on the recent find of a small number of empty 122-millimetre warheads for chemical weapons. Iraq declared that it appointed a commission of inquiry to look for more. Fine. Why not extend the search to other items, declare what may be found and destroy it under our supervision?

When we have urged our Iraqi counterparts to present more evidence, we have all too often met the response that there are no more documents. All existing relevant documents have been presented, we are told. All documents relating to the biological weapons programme were destroyed together with the weapons.

However, Iraq has all the archives of the Government and its various departments, institutions and mechanisms. It should have budgetary documents, requests for funds and reports on how they have been used. It should also have letters of credits, bills of lading and reports on production and losses of material.

In response to a recent UNMOVIC request for a number of specific documents, the only new documents Iraq provided was a ledger of 193 pages, which Iraq stated included all imports from 1983 to 1990 by the Technical and Scientific Importation Division, the importing authority for the biological weapons programme. Potentially, it might help to clear some open issues.

The recent inspection find in the private home of a scientist of a box of some 3,000 pages of documents, much of them relating to the laser enrichment of uranium, supports a concern that has long existed that documents might be distributed to the homes of private individuals. This interpretation is refuted by the Iraqi side, which claims that research staff sometimes may bring home papers from their work places. On our side, we cannot help but think that the case might not be isolated and that such placements of documents is deliberate to make discovery difficult and to seek to shield documents by placing them in private homes.

Any further sign of the concealment of documents would be serious. The Iraqi side committed itself at our recent talks to encourage persons to accept access also to private sites. There can be no sanctuaries for proscribed items, activities or documents. A denial of prompt access to any site would be a very serious matter.

When Iraq claims that tangible evidence in the form of documents is not available, it ought at least to

find individuals, engineers, scientists and managers to testify about their experience. Large weapons programmes are moved and managed by people. Interviews with individuals who may have worked in programmes in the past may fill blank spots in our knowledge and understanding. It could also be useful to learn that they are now employed in peaceful sectors. These are the reasons why UNMOVIC asked for a list of such persons, in accordance with resolution 1441 (2002).

Some 400 names for all biological and chemical weapons programmes, as well as for their missile programmes, were provided by the Iraqi side. This can be compared to over 3,500 names of people associated with those past weapons programmes that UNSCOM either interviewed in the 1990s or knew from documents and other sources. At my recent meeting in Baghdad, the Iraqi side committed itself to supplementing the list, and some 80 additional names have been provided.

In the past, much valuable information came from interviews. There were also cases in which the interviewee was clearly intimidated by the presence of, and interruption by, Iraqi officials. This was the background of the provision of resolution 1441 (2002) for a right for UNMOVIC and the IAEA to hold private interviews "in the mode or location" of our choice, in Baghdad or even abroad.

To date, we have asked 11 individuals for interviews in Baghdad. The replies have invariably been that the individual will speak only at Iraq's monitoring directorate or, at any rate, in the presence of an Iraqi official. This could be due to a wish on the part of the invited to have evidence that they have not said anything that the authorities did not wish them to say. At our recent talks in Baghdad, the Iraqi side committed itself to encouraging persons to accept interviews "in private" — that is to say, alone with us. Despite this, the pattern has not changed. However, we hope that, with further encouragement from the authorities, knowledgeable individuals will accept private interviews, in Baghdad or abroad.

I must not conclude this update without some notes on the growing capability of UNMOVIC.

In the past two months, UNMOVIC has built up its capabilities in Iraq from nothing to 260 staff members from 60 countries. This includes approximately 100 new UNMOVIC inspectors, 60 air operations staff, as well as security personnel, communications, translation and interpretation staff, medical support, and other services at our Baghdad office and Mosul field office. All serve the United Nations and report to no one else. Furthermore, our roster of inspectors will continue to grow as our training programme continues — even at this moment we have a training course in session in Vienna. At the end of that course, we shall have a roster of about 350 qualified experts from which to draw inspectors.

A team supplied by the Swiss Government is refurbishing our office in Baghdad, which had been empty for four years. The Government of New Zealand has contributed both a medical team and a communications team. The German Government will contribute unmanned aerial vehicles for surveillance and a group of specialists to operate them for us within Iraq. The Government of Cyprus has kindly allowed us to set up a field office in Larnaka. All of these contributions have been of assistance in quickly starting up our inspections and enhancing our capabilities. So has help from the United Nations in New York and from sister organizations in Baghdad.

In the past two months, during which we have built up our presence in Iraq, we have conducted about 300 inspections to more than 230 different sites. Of these, more than 20 were sites that had not been inspected before. By the end of December, UNMOVIC began using helicopters both for the transport of inspectors and for actual inspection work. We now have eight helicopters. They have already proved invaluable in helping to "freeze" large sites by observing the movement of traffic in and around the area.

The setting up of a field office in Mosul has facilitated rapid inspections of sites in northern Iraq. We plan to establish soon a second field office in the Basra area, where we have already inspected a number of sites.

We now have an inspection apparatus that permits us to send multiple inspection teams every day all over Iraq, by road or by air. Let me end by simply noting that that capability, which has been built up in a short time and which is now operating, is at the disposal of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Blix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. ElBaradei: For the past 60 days, the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have been engaged in the process of verifying the existence or absence of a nuclear-weapon programme in Iraq. Today, pursuant to paragraph 5 of resolution 1441 (2002), I have submitted to the President of the Security Council an update report on our progress since we resumed our nuclear-verification activities in Iraq — in terms of the approach we have adopted, the tools we have used, the specific results achieved, the degree of cooperation we have received, and, finally, our view on how we should proceed. Copies of the report are available in this Chamber. Let me in this statement outline the key aspects of this report.

To understand the approach of IAEA inspections over the past two months, it is important first to recall what was accomplished during our inspections from 1991 to 1998, in fulfilment of our Security Council mandate to eliminate Iraq's nuclear-weapon programme. In September 1991, the IAEA seized documents in Iraq that demonstrated the extent of its nuclear-weapon programme. By the end of 1992, we had largely destroyed, removed or rendered harmless all Iraqi facilities and equipment relevant to nuclear-weapon production. We confiscated Iraq's nuclear-weapon-usable material — highly enriched uranium and plutonium — and by early 1994 we had removed it from the country. By December 1998, when the inspections were brought to a halt with a military strike imminent, we were confident that we had not missed any significant components of Iraq's nuclear programme.

While we did not claim absolute certainty, our conclusion at that time was that we had neutralized Iraq's nuclear-weapon programme and that there were no indications that Iraq retained any physical capability to produce weapon-usable nuclear material.

During the intervening four years of our absence from Iraq, we continued our analytical work to the best of our ability, using satellite imagery and other information. But no remote analysis can replace on-site inspection, and we were therefore not able to reach any conclusions about Iraq's compliance with its Security Council obligations in the nuclear field after December 1998.

Against this backdrop, when Iraq agreed last September to reopen its doors to inspection, and following the subsequent adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1441 (2002), which strengthened the IAEA's authority and the inspection process, the first goal of our inspection activities was reconnaissance. In this phase, we sought to re-establish rapidly our knowledge base of Iraq's nuclear capabilities, to ensure that key facilities had not been reopened, to verify the location of nuclear material and relevant non-nuclear material, and to identify and begin interviewing key Iraqi personnel.

Over these first two months of inspection, we have made good progress in our knowledge of Iraq's nuclear capabilities, with a total of 139 inspections at some 106 locations to date. The bulk of these inspections have taken place at State-run or private industrial facilities, research centres and universities — either at locations where Iraq's significant technical capabilities were known to have existed in the past, or at new locations suggested by remote monitoring and analysis. All inspection activities have been carried out without prior notification to Iraq, except where notification was needed to ensure the availability of required support. IAEA inspectors have taken — and will continue to take — full advantage of the inspection authority granted by resolution 1441 (2002). In doing so, the inspectors have been instructed to make every effort to conduct their activities with appropriate professionalism and sensitivity.

While we are continuing to some extent with this reconnaissance work, our inspections are now well into the investigative phase — with particular emphasis on determining what, if anything, has occurred in Iraq over the past four years that is relevant to the re-establishment of Iraq's nuclear capabilities. These investigative inspections focus on areas of concern identified by other States; facilities identified through satellite images as having been modified or constructed since 1998; and other inspection leads identified independently by the IAEA.

In parallel with these inspection activities, the IAEA has been conducting an exhaustive analysis of supporting information obtained from various sources. In this context, we have integrated the new information submitted by Iraq, including the declaration submitted

on 7 December in response to resolution 1441 (2002), with the records we had accumulated between 1991 and 1998 and the additional information we had compiled through remote monitoring since 1998. The Iraqi declaration was consistent with our existing understanding of Iraq's pre-1991 nuclear programme; however, it did not provide any new information relevant to certain questions that have been outstanding since 1998, in particular regarding Iraq's progress prior to 1991 related to weapons design and centrifuge development. While these questions do not constitute unresolved disarmament issues, they nevertheless need further clarification.

In addition to on-site inspection and offsite analysis, IAEA inspectors have employed a variety of tools to accomplish their mission. Taking advantage of the signature of radioactive materials, we have resumed the monitoring of Iraq's rivers, canals and lakes to detect the presence of certain radioisotopes. A broad variety of environmental samples and surface swipe samples have been collected from locations across Iraq and taken to IAEA laboratories for analysis, and we have reinstituted routine car-borne and hand-held gamma surveys for the detection of undeclared nuclear material.

The inspectors have also conducted a great number of interviews of Iraqi scientists, managers and technicians — primarily in the workplace in the course of unannounced inspections — as a valuable source of information about past and present programmes and activities. The information gained has been helpful in assessing the completeness and accuracy of Iraq's declarations.

Resolution 1441 (2002) also clearly gave IAEA and the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission the authority to determine the modalities and venues for conducting interviews with Iraqi officials and other persons. The first two individuals whom the IAEA requested to see privately declined to be interviewed without the presence of an Iraqi Government representative. This has been a restricting factor. Although the Iraqi Government recently committed itself to encouraging Iraqi officials and other personnel to be interviewed in private when requested, regrettably the third request, made two days ago, for a private interview was again turned down by the interviewee.

The IAEA will continue to determine the modalities and locations of the interviews, including the possibility of interviewing Iraqi personnel abroad. We will continue to report to the Security Council on our efforts to conduct interviews according to our preferred modalities and venues and our degree of success in that regard.

Let me summarize briefly a number of the findings that have resulted from our inspection activities thus far.

First, we have inspected all of those buildings and facilities that were identified, through satellite imagery, as having been modified or constructed over the past four years. IAEA inspectors have been able to gain ready access and to clarify the nature of the activities currently being conducted in these facilities. No prohibited nuclear activities have been identified during these inspections.

A particular issue of focus has been the attempted procurement by Iraq of high-strength aluminium tubes and the question of whether these tubes, if acquired, could be used for the manufacture of nuclear centrifuges. Iraqi authorities have indicated that their unsuccessful attempts to procure the aluminium tubes related to a programme to reverse engineer conventional rockets. To verify this information, IAEA inspectors have inspected the relevant rocket production and storage sites, taken tube samples, interviewed relevant Iraqi personnel and reviewed procurement contracts and related documents. From our analysis to date, it appears that the aluminium tubes would be consistent with the purpose stated by Iraq and, unless modified, would not be suitable for manufacturing centrifuges. However, we are still investigating this issue. It is clear, however, that the attempt to acquire such tubes is prohibited under Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

Another area of focus has been to determine how certain other dual-use materials have been relocated or used — that is, materials that could be used in nuclear-weapons production but also have other legitimate uses. A good example is the Iraqi declaration concerning high-explosive HMX, which states that, of the HMX under IAEA seals in Iraq at the end of 1998, some had been supplied to cement plants as an industrial explosive for mining. The whereabouts and final use of the removed material are matters that will require further investigation, although it will be

difficult to verify the disposition of the HMX that is declared to have been used.

A fourth focal point has been the investigation of reports of Iraqi efforts to import uranium after 1991. The Iraqi authorities have denied any such attempts. The IAEA will continue to pursue this issue. At this stage, however, we do not have enough information and we would appreciate receiving more.

We are also making progress on a number of other issues related, for example, to the attempted importation of a magnet production facility.

In addition to the new authorities granted by resolution 1441 (2002), I believe that the unified resolve of the Council to support the inspection process has been a vital ingredient and must remain so if we are to achieve a peaceful resolution of the situation in Iraq. I trust that the Council will continue its unified and unequivocal support for the inspection process in Iraq.

Over the next several months, inspections will focus ever more closely on follow-up of specific concerns as we continue to conduct visits to sites and interviews with key Iraqi personnel. We have begun helicopter operations, which increase the inspectors' mobility and their ability to respond rapidly to new information and allow wide-scale radiation detection surveys. Laboratory analysis of environmental samples is continuing and we will be reinstalling air samplers for wide-area environmental monitoring. We also will reintroduce surveillance systems with video cameras in key locations to allow near-real-time remote monitoring of dual-use equipment.

By its very nature, the inspection process, both in Iraq and elsewhere, is based not on trust, but on a thorough process of fact-finding supported by access to all available information. Where applicable, this should include information available to States that may be relevant to the purpose of the inspection. We have begun in the last few weeks to receive more actionable information from States — that is, information of direct and current value for inspection follow-up. I would continue to call on States that have access to such information to provide it to the inspecting organizations so that the inspection process can be accelerated and additional assurances can be generated.

Finally, we have urged Iraq once again to increase the degree of its cooperation with the inspection process. In support of the IAEA inspections to date, the Iraqi authorities have provided access to all facilities visited, including presidential compounds and private residences, without conditions and without delay. The Iraqi authorities also have been cooperative in making available additional original documentation in response to requests by IAEA inspectors.

In our discussions with Iraqi officials last week in Baghdad, we emphasized the need to shift from passive support — that is, responding as needed to inspectors' requests — to proactive support — that is, voluntarily assisting inspectors by providing documentation, people and other evidence that will assist in filling in the remaining gaps in our information.

One example of how Iraq could be more proactive was illustrated by the inspection of a private residence just two weeks ago, which resulted in the retrieval of a sizeable number of documents, some of which were classified and related, in part, to Iraq's pre-1991 efforts to use laser technology for enriching uranium. While these documents do not appear to reflect new or current activities related to nuclear weapons in Iraq, they may enhance our detailed understanding of certain aspects of Iraq's pre-1991 nuclear programme. It is urgent and essential, therefore, that Iraq, on its own initiative, identify and provide any additional evidence that would assist the inspectors in carrying out their mandate.

This proactive engagement on the part of Iraq would be — as we have told them — in its own best interest and is a window of opportunity that may not remain open for very much longer. Iraq should make every effort to be fully transparent — with a demonstrated willingness to resolve issues rather than requiring pressure to do so. The international community will not be satisfied when questions remain open with regard to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; the world is asking for a high level of assurance that Iraq is completely free from all such weapons and is already impatient to receive it. The sooner such assurance can be provided by the inspecting organizations, the sooner the prospects that a peaceful resolution will translate into a plausible reality.

Inspections are time-consuming. I should mention that even in the case of South Africa, where full and active cooperation was forthcoming, it took the IAEA approximately two years to complete the process in

that country. However, if inspection is successful, it can ensure disarmament through peaceful means. It is worth recalling that in our past experience in Iraq, the elimination of its nuclear weapons programme was accomplished mostly through intrusive inspections. It is also worth recalling that the presence of international inspectors in Iraq today continues to serve as an effective deterrent to, and insurance against, resumption of programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction, even as we continue to look for possible past activities.

To conclude, we have to date found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons programme since the elimination of the programme in the 1990s. However, our work is steadily progressing and should be allowed to run its natural course. With our verification system now in place, barring exceptional circumstances and provided there is sustained, proactive cooperation by Iraq, we should be able within the next few months to provide credible assurance that Iraq has no nuclear weapons programme. These few months, in my view, would be a valuable investment in peace because they could help us avoid a war. We trust that we will continue to have the support of the Council as we make every effort to verify Iraq's nuclear disarmament through peaceful means and to demonstrate that the inspection process can and does work as a central feature of the international nuclear arms control regime.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. ElBaradei for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.